



# LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## *REGULAR MEETING MINUTES*

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| <b>Date:</b>     | November 2, 2022  |
| <b>Time:</b>     | 6:30PM  |
| <b>Location:</b> | City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01852 |

Members of the public may view the meeting via LTC and those wishing to speak regarding a specific agenda item shall register to speak in advance of the meeting by sending an email to the Superintendent indicating the agenda item, a phone number and email address so we can provide a zoom link to access the meeting. Email address is [mpalazzo@lowell.k12.ma.us](mailto:mpalazzo@lowell.k12.ma.us). If no access to email you may contact us at 978-674-4324. All requests must be submitted before 2:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

### **1. SALUTE TO FLAG**

### **2. ROLL CALL**

**On a roll call at 6:47 p.m., members present were, namely: Mr. Lay, Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau, Ms. Chhoun, Ms. Delrossi and Ms. Doherty.**

### **3. MINUTES**

**3.1.** Approval of the Minutes of the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, October 19, 2022

**Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting that was held on Wednesday, October 19, 2022; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 yeas APPROVED**

### **4. PERMISSION TO ENTER**

**4.1.** Permission to Enter: November 2, 2022

**Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve the Permission to Enter: seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED**



## **5. MOTIONS**

**5.1. (By Jackie Doherty):** Request the Superintendent provide the committee with a plan to provide staff training on Security-Safety Protocols and Implementation including who would lead and be invited to the training, what would be covered, and when, and how often it would occur.

**Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin 7 yeas APPROVED**

**5.2. (By Susie Chhoun):** Request the School Committee support efforts to inform the community of question 1 on the upcoming November ballot which proposes an amendment to the state constitution to establish an additional 4% tax on the portion of incomes over one million dollars to be used, subject to appropriation by the state Legislature, on education and transportation.

**Ms. Chhoun made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin 7 yeas APPROVED**

**5.3. (By Eileen DelRossi)** Request the superintendent to report the total number of all professional teaching and administrative staff that are on emergency licensure waivers or regular waivers throughout the district.

**Ms. Doherty made a friendly amendment to the motion with no objection from the maker of the motion to include emergency licensure and pending licensure.**

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Thompson 7 yeas APPROVED**

**5.4. (By Eileen DelRossi)** Request the Superintendent to report on LHS Security Guard chain of command policies and procedures in regards to reporting students to school administration - How do security guards know when to escalate student incidents to the house office? Is communication verbal or written? What types of professional development are available for security guards?

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Chhoun 7 yeas APPROVED**

**5.5. (By Eileen DelRossi)** Request the Superintendent to report on the functionality of the bathrooms in 1922 building at LHS.

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Doherty 7 yeas APPROVED**

**5.6. (By Connie Martin):** Request a review of September 12, 2022 communication from the Lowell Board of Health with representatives from the Lowell Health Department/Lowell Board of Health.

**Ms. Martin made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Thompson 7 yeas APPROVED**

**5.7. (By Connie Martin):** Request a report from the Administration listing all overtime payments for the current school year beginning July 1, 2022 and including any supplemental payments or contracts awarded to current LPS salaried and non-salaried staff.

Ms. Martin stated that the list should include all funding.

**Ms. Martin made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Lay 7 yeas APPROVED**



## **6. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

### **6.1. Response to Motion 03. CFO of 09/21/22 by Stacey Thompson Regarding Diversifying Contractors and Partnerships**

Ms. Turner, Chief Financial Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that the district is restricted by Chapter 30b rules which dictates which vendors to choose from based on lowest bidder or qualifying metrics that are predetermined prior to bidding. The report states that a balance between abiding by Chapter 30b rules and the districts need to diversify. The report stated that after researching how to balance between the current rules that are intended to spread the wealth and ensure fair competition and the districts need and commitment to diversity the state is currently doing the following to help districts:

- The state is committed to “intentionality” with diversifying. They are referring to this as the Great Alignment. Rather than just opening the doors for diverse candidates to bid, they are actively adding diverse vendors to the state contract lists which allow districts to NOT go through the bid process and just choose from those on the state contract list. This would allow us to abide by 30B rules and still choose vendors that reflect our student populations.
- One example of intentionality is for us to actively seek out diverse vendors to invite them to bid on our projects. The state Supplier Diversity Office helps connect districts with diverse vendors by sharing invitation to bid with diverse candidates and offering lists of diverse candidates. For example, rather than just bidding and hoping for responses from diverse vendors, we could utilize lists such as [www.blackboston.com](http://www.blackboston.com) which is a list of black owned companies in Boston or Boston Lawyers of Color group or resources such as the New England Today – Guide to New England Black Owned Businesses to actively seek out diverse bidders. In addition, this office offers assistance to the diverse vendors on how to market and prepare bids to increase their likelihood with winning the bid projects.
- The state is also actively trying to “digitize” the procurement process to avoid legacy and homegrown systems or overly complicated paper processes that deter or negatively impact diverse bidders.
- The state is committed to building strong alliances between agencies that support and build relationships between districts and vendors/suppliers.
- Other state and federal methods of helping with this dilemma of diversifying despite strict procurement rules include executive departments having spending goals/benchmarks to spend on diverse contracts.

The report stated that the current list of contractors and partners is not nearly as diverse as our community and student population and that the district needs to operate with intentionality to mirror the state’s initiatives and attempts to diversify. Ms. Turner stated that Lowell Public Schools will add a step to our procurement process which will be to research diverse vendors for projects and reach out to them to invite them to bid as well as guide the vendor by sharing the services provided by the Supplier Diversity Office to help with preparing and marketing their bids.



Ms. Thompson stated that she likes that we are seeking diverse contractors and partnerships. She asked if we have a site for the vendor to go to. She thanked Ms. Turner for her pledge to do this.

Ms. Turner stated that we do not have a site yet, but she is developing a checklist and will be inviting people to apply.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.6 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin 7 yeas APPROVED**

**6.2. Response to Motion 04. COO of 09/07/2022 by Eileen DelRossi Regarding Internal Hiring Process**

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that the Human Resources (HR) Assistant Director created a hiring tool to help organize and score applicants during the screening process. A record of all hires after this tool was created is housed the HR department. It is a generic scoring rubric and questions are developed by screening committee members. The rubric is completed by the screening committee that sits on each hiring team after an anti-bias training and pre-interview meeting is conducted with each screening committee group. The HR office follows the last approved comprehensive hiring protocol.

Ms. Delrossi asked when this tool was created.

Dr. Hall stated that he wasn't sure, but most likely about two (2) years ago.

Ms. Delrossi stated that she was looking for more regarding the panel, because she is hearing panels haven't been consistent.

Ms. Thompson asked where in the process are there career ladder opportunities.

Dr. Hall stated there is no real ascension for a lot of the positions.

Ms. Thompson asked if information is in the employees records after they speak to an employee about a better career opportunity.

Dr. Hall stated no, not necessarily.

Ms. Doherty stated that she has received numerous complaints around licensure. She also asked why a position would be put on hold and then several months later move forward.

Superintendent Boyd clarified that there is an emergency licensure and a hard ship waiver.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.6 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin 7 yeas APPROVED**



**6.3. Response to Motion 04. COO of 09/31/2022 by Stacey Thompson Regarding Language Assistance Provided for Those Applying to Roles Within LPS**

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that Lowell Public School does not have an exact method of assisting potential employees that require language assistance during the in-person application process. The report stated that the Human Resources Office does have personnel that speaks Khmer to help those who need assistance with this particular language. The Superintendent's secretary also assists Spanish speakers, and when necessary, personnel from the Equity office is accessed for assistance. The report also states that cafeteria applications have been adjusted to facilitate applications and to eliminate any language barriers.

Ms. Thompson stated that she likes the response and appreciates the forms being adjusted and asked if we have had any job fairs with the CMAA or other groups that can assist us.

Dr. Hall responded in the affirmative and stated his office attended a job fair this week, but there is still work to be done.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.6 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin 7 years APPROVED**

**6.4. Response to Motion COO of 10/19/2022 by Stacey Thompson Regarding Employee Feedback to Improve the Hiring Process**

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that Exit Interviews have been distributed/conducted in-person and via email attachments and the department has a record of all resignations, retirements and transfers. Also, TNTP worked with the Equity team and the Human Resources Department to understand the current landscape and practices for diversity hiring, recruitment and retention. They connected with current staff members, students, families, and the community to collect feedback on Lowell Public Schools talent systems and structures as part of their data collection. TNTP provided the district with a complete final report including recommendations for improvement on diversity hiring.

Ms. Thompson stated that Exit Interviews are very important and asked if part of the questions in the interviews are: 1. Do you feel heard or supported in your role; 2. What advice would you offer the candidate taking over your role; 3. Do you feel safe sharing.

Ms. Doherty stated that the response is not complete and this is only a partial report. She stated that the following wasn't addressed and asked when she can expect to see this report:

"Ms. Doherty made a friendly amendment with no objection from the maker of the motion to include quarterly reports on types of complaints and nature of the investigations without employee names and any lawsuits, claim letters and MCAD filing".



Superintendent Boyd stated that quarterly reports will be coming out in January.

Ms. Doherty stated that she would like it in December.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.6 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin 7 yeas APPROVED**

**6.5. Response to Motion COO of 10/19/2022 by Stacey Thompson Regarding Chief Equity Officer Involvement in the Employment Process**

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that there has been constant collaboration between the Human Resources (HR) Department and the Chief Equity Officer about requirements, language, job opportunities and descriptions, improving access training, and other employment related issues. The collaboration assists in working on a daily basis to improve the many HR functions. The report states that there is a meeting planned next week between the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Equity Officer and TNTP to discuss the potential for a Diversity Hiring Index to provide hiring agents more historical data to improve the hiring process at Lowell Public Schools.

Ms. Thompson stated that she would love to attend the first meeting. She stated that she didn't realize we didn't have an HR Director and stated that Dr. Hall is pulled away on too many other issues. She asked if we should be looking at securing a Human Resources Director.

Superintendent Boyd stated that securing a Human Resources Director is under continuous analysis.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.6 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin 7 yeas APPROVED**

**6.6. Response to Motion COO of 10/19/2022 by Stacey Thompson Regarding 2018 HR Audit**

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that the Lowell Public Schools (LPS) issued an RFP for a wage study in the Spring of 2022 and there were no responsive bids. The district is aware of some entities which may be interested and is re-working the RFP and will reissue it within two (2) weeks. The report states that bids will be presented to the School Committee for review and discussion likely by the end of November. The report also included the 2018 HR Audit which was discussed at the Joint Human Relations and Equity & Access subcommittee meeting last week and many of the recommendations within the 2018 HR audit have been adopted.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.6 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin 7 yeas APPROVED**

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**7.1. Budget Transfer Request**

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve the budget transfer of \$237,000; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas**



## 7.2. Consideration of Options to Support Human Resources

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided the 2018 HR Audit which was discussed in a subcommittee meeting last week. The report states that many of the recommendations within the 2018 HR audit have been adopted. In reference to the comprehensive compensation and classification study, such went out in an RFP in the Spring of 2022 and received no bids. Dr. Hall stated that the district is rewriting the RFP and pursuant to recent inquiries and expects the district will receive bidders when it is relaunched in November. The report stated that the administration hopes to use the results of this wage study to support recommendations to the School Committee related to a proposed compensation policy for adoption. Dr. Hall also provided two (2) options moving forward for the Committee's review.

Ms. Martin stated that she believes the district needs to have an audit due to the calls she has been receiving stating that screening committees aren't being respected as well as licensure issues. She stated that audit will provide proof and tell the Committee and the community what is happening.

Dr. Hall stated that it's hard for an audit to determine that.

Ms. Martin stated a document can be crafted and the auditors can audit random sections. She stated that she didn't come to the decision to have an audit lightly, but believes it is important to have it. She also stated she would like the Committee to be part of the process.

**Ms. Martin made a motion to approve Option 1 and move forward with a Human Resources Audit; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 6 yeas, 1 nay (Mr. Lay) APPROVED**

**Ms. Doherty made a motion that the RFP's focus should be to look at the current Human Resources Office practices to make sure they're compliant with Massachusetts General Laws, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the district's policies and to have Ms. Martin and Ms. Thompson, Chairs of the Human Resources & Labor Relations and Equity & Access Subcommittees take part in the process and for the Auditor to meet with the School Committee before to hear their concerns and to provide a full report and presentation to the Committee upon completion; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED**

## 8. PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

### 8.1. Donated Sick Days

**Mr. Lay made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED**

**Ms. Martin made a motion to take motion item # 5.6. (By Connie Martin): Request a review of September 12, 2022 communication from the Lowell Board of Health with representatives from the Lowell Health Department/Lowell Board of Health out of order to allow the Health Department to address the Committee; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED**

Ms. Keegan, Chairwoman of the Board of Health addressed the Committee and stated that the letter that was sent was to make sure Massachusetts General Laws were being followed and to ensure that





immunizations were being done before students were sitting in the classroom. She stated they had a meeting with Ms. Phillips and everyone appeared to be on the same page, but students were reported to be sitting in chairs who were not immunized and they continued to receive reports of students who were not medically cleared. The letter was sent to the Superintendent and the School Committee so moving forward everyone would be on the same page. The Board of Health wanted it to appear on the agenda so it could be discussed and to make sure it doesn't happen next year.

Ms. Golden, City of Lowell Health Director stated that it was a rocky start to the school year, but hoping next year we will have a better start. She stated things seem to be go ok presently.

Ms. Doherty asked the administration to provide a report on the registration process.

Ms. Martin stated that we should take a look at registration and assignment. She stated if we begin registering earlier it allows the district to get the necessary paperwork that is needed to complete the process earlier and at the same time you could still maintain open seats.

Ms. Doherty took a moment of personal privilege to discuss several phone calls and emails she received from parents of 1<sup>st</sup> graders whose children weren't at their bus stop on Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup> and the parents weren't able to get in touch with anyone at the school department and when a parent looked at the Family Resource Center website it read that it closed at 3:00 p.m. She stated their needs to be phone numbers for parents to call.

**Ms. Doherty made a motion to receive a report with a plan for parents to have phone numbers to reach someone to provide accurate information regarding their bus children so this doesn't happen in the future; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 yeas APPROVED**

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to cancel the December 21, 2022 School Committee meeting due to the upcoming holiday; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED**





## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D., Superintendent and  
Secretary to the Lowell School Committee**

**JDB/mes**